



# OESNEWS

*Governor's Office of Emergency Services*

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## **Governor Schwarzenegger Requests Federal Disaster Assistance for Seven Counties**

SACRAMENTO – Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has asked President George W. Bush to declare a major disaster for the February winter storms in Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego and Ventura counties.

“Heavy rain, snow, mudslides and flooding have resulted seven deaths, an estimated \$61 million in damage to public facilities and damage to approximately 672 homes,” said Henry Renteria, Director for the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services. “This emergency continues to represent a severe risk to the State, and federal assistance is needed to protect public health and safety and restore critical infrastructure.”

The request specifically asks the President to make funds available to assist eligible individuals with grants, loans, disaster unemployment assistance and crisis counseling, to reimburse 75 percent of the eligible costs incurred by local and state agencies while implementing emergency protective measures and in the repair and restoration of damaged roads, water treatment systems and other public facilities. The request by the Governor also seeks implementation of FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

In his request for federal assistance, the Governor noted that the Feb. 12-24 storms added an additional 18 inches of rain to soil already saturated from the January storms, producing the wettest winter in Southern California since 1890. He also noted that the 2003 Southern California Wildfires and the bark beetle epidemic have also impacted many of the counties included in his request for federal assistance.

On Wednesday, the Governor proclaimed a State of Emergency, authorizing the state to reimburse 75 percent of local response, repair and restoration costs incurred by Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego and Ventura counties. The state of emergency proclamation also Santa Barbara County because of the impact of the storms on the state highway system in that area.

In evaluating the impacts of the Feb. 12-24 storms on behalf of the Governor, the Office of Emergency Services (OES) has identified the following impacts and hazards that still exist as a result of this disaster:

- Mudflows and land slippages continue to be a problem for communities throughout Southern California, including Laguna Beach, Anaheim, Mission Viejo, La Jolla, Oceanside, the city of San Diego, Chino Hills, Carlsbad, city of Los Angeles, Highland Park, Monterey Peak and numerous other areas.
- Residents in the areas burned by the 2003 Southern California Wildfires and the bark beetle epidemic face imminent danger of further flooding and debris and mudflows.

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